

VZCZCXRO3863  
RR RUEHROV  
DE RUEHKH #1185/01 2181441  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 051441Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1522  
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001185

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KSCA](#) [OTRA](#) [EAID](#) [CDC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: AEC PLENARY OF AUGUST 5, 2008: MEMBERS STRESS NEED TO  
APPOINT ABYEI ADMINISTRATION

11. (U) SUMMARY: At the 34th Plenary Session of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) held August 5, 2008, members unanimously stressed the need for the two CPA partners to finally agree on an interim administration for the Abyei area to build on the momentum of progress made on security in the troubled region. The AEC chairman urged the four working groups to take the recommendations contained in the recently completed Mid-Term Evaluation as their work plan for the next six months. END SUMMARY

ABYEI: URGENT NEED FOR APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION  
-----

12. (SBU) Foreign members of the AEC who spoke were unanimous in pressing the two partners to agree on naming the interim administration for Abyei. AEC Chairman Ambassador Plumbly noted that the action is now six weeks overdue. He had spoken to VP Taha on August 4 and stressed the need for urgent progress. The delay puts into doubt the credibility of the Abyei roadmap. CDA Fernandez praised progress made in the realm of security for Abyei - namely, withdrawal of non-JIU forces, particularly the 31st SAF brigade which, he pointed out, had been quartered in Abyei town for 44 years. Now, he said, the two sides need to maintain that momentum with agreement on the Administration. Speaking for the NCP, presidential advisor Sayed el Khatib said an evaluation of the talks on naming the Administration differs from day to day; right now, he said, that outlook does not appear very positive. The SPLM rep noted that progress on the nomination should be easier than it has turned out to be.

13. (SBU) El Khatib noted that solving the interim administration impasse should be easy. The Abyei Protocol and June 8 roadmap are clear. "You name your position and I will name mine," but the need for consensus has made it difficult. What El Khatib was implying was that the NCP is well within its rights to name whoever it wants, including a Misseriya Arab from Abyei, as Deputy Administrator.

14. (U) The Norwegian Ambassador said his country, the UK and other donors are prepared to contribute to an Abyei reconstruction fund. He suggested beginning work on at least a needs assessment so that the incoming administration will be able to set to work more quickly. The SPLM rep expressed strong support for this approach. The NCP rep said preparing the groundwork might be possible, but cautioned against any attempt to make an end-run around the yet-to-be-named Administration.

15. (U) The UK DCM related details of a briefing by the UNMIS Police Commissioner on progress made on the new Abyei police force. Each side has already contributed 25 members for the new JIU police force, and six trainers are to arrive in Abyei on August 6. Overall, the briefing had been quite encouraging, he said.

WORKPLAN FOR NEXT 6 MONTHS  
-----

16. (U) Chairman Plumbly noted that the AEC's Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was now posted on the AEC website, by agreement of the two parties. However, more needs to be done to publicize the report. He urged the four working groups to use the MTE's recommendations as

the basis for their work plan for the next six months.

NOMINATIONS TO NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION (NEC)

17. (U) Plumbly expressed hope that the Presidency would announce the nominations to the NEC on time (by August 14). NCP rep Sayed el Khatib said the nominations are "imminent," but noted that the action requires consultations with all the major parties, most particularly the SPLM. A list of names is under discussion within the presidency, he said.

OTHER ACTIONS

18. (U) Among the various other matters discussed at the plenary:

-- CDA Fernandez invited all interested AEC partners to an August 6 session of the Wealth Sharing Working Group, which will feature a presentation by the Joint Technical Committee on Oil Revenue Sharing.

-- The AEC will arrange for a briefing on status of progress on the other two of the three areas, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan.

-- The Italian coordinator of the Power Sharing Working Group is still working to schedule a workshop on elections; the workshop will await appointment of the National Elections Commission.

-- The Netherlands coordinator of the Three Areas Working Group reported that the agreement to refer the Abyei border issue to arbitration at The Hague is in place; the next step is for the two

KHARTOUM 00001185 002 OF 002

sides to agree on the panel of judges.

-- The Dutch also announced they are organizing another AEC trip to Abyei for the week of August 17.

19. (SBU) COMMENT: The Plenary session was marked by a positive atmosphere, especially between the two CPA partners. The experience of working together on, and producing, the Mid-Term Evaluation obviously is still working its magic. The plenary sent out a strong message on the urgency of following through on naming the Abyei administration - a message we can only hope will be heard by the Presidency in the coming days.

FERNANDEZ